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February 1, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE

SUBJECT:

Call on You by Mr. William Downey  
February 4 at 12:00 noon

You are scheduled to see Mr. William Downey, brother of John T. Downey, the CIA employee who is still incarcerated in Peking, February 4 at 12:00 noon. William Downey and his mother have been unhappy over the fact that while you contacted Richard Fecteau's family in December after the Chinese exercised clemency with respect to detained Americans, no one from the White House called them. (We have learned, too, that CIA contacts were at only the working level.)

The Downeys have been particularly assiduous over the years in pressing for the release of Jack Downey, and have been assisted in the past half year by Professor Jerry Cohen's efforts on behalf of his former Yale classmate. Jerry Cohen together with the Downeys have stimulated numerous letter-writing campaigns since last summer. The Downeys have visited Jack in Peking on several occasions over the past decade, most recently last October, when they found him in good health and spirits.

William Downey, an articulate New York attorney, called on me last October just before our second Peking visit. He was highly skeptical that we had been doing everything possible to secure his brother's release, and both he and his mother in the past year have become increasingly critical of our efforts.

Suggested Talking Points

-- We were encouraged by Chinese flexibility shown in their release last month of Jack Downey's colleague, Richard Fecteau, and Mary Ann Harbert, and in their reduction of Jack's sentence from life to an additional five years.

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ON-FILE NSC  
RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS  
APPLY

NSS review completed.

SECRET

-- You raised the question of Jack and other Americans' confinement with Chou En-lai during both of your trips to Peking.

-- The President intends, as he stated in his January 2 TV interview with CBS, to raise the issue of our POWs interned in Indochina as well as Americans imprisoned in China during his China visit. ("In the event that at the time of the meetings that I will have in China and later on in the Soviet Union we have not made progress in this area, the subjects will again be raised.") He considers the matter one of great importance.

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